

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
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R 200702Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5724

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SPOP, YE
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL PROBLEMS
-- POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION

REF: STATE 107370

1. REGRET DELAY IN REPLYING.

2. PROBLEM OF POPULATION GROWTH HAS NOT LOOMED LARGE IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH YAR IN PAST. DUE TO LARGE-SCALE EMIGRATION OF MALES IN 15-45 YEAR-OLD GROUP, AND DUE TO PRIMITIVE HEALTH CONDITIONS, POPULATION GROWTH HERE IS PROBABLY UNDER THE OFFICIAL RATE OF 2.5 PER CENT. EXTREME BACKWARDNESS OF COUNTRY AND SCANTY ABILITY OF GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND INFORMATION HAS LED TO ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO PRIORITIES OTHER THAN POPULATION.

3. FROM CASUAL COVERSATIONS OVER LONG PERIOD, HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT BIRTH CONTROL DEVICES ARE WIDELY AVAILABLE IN PHARMACIES AND INCREASINGLY USED BY WOMEN. CENSUS FIGURES SHOW THAT EACH WOMAN STILL BEAR A LARGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN -- OVER SIX -- BUT THE GOVERNMENT AT LEAST IS PUTTING

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NO OBSTACLE IN THE WAY OF SALE OF CONTRACEPTIVE DEVICES.

4. EMBASSY, AID AND ICA ELEMENTS OF THIS MISSION HAVE RECENTLY COMBINED TO PROVIDE SPEAKER ON POPULATION MATTERS. HE MET WITH SMALL BUT ACTIVE FAMILY PLANNING ORGANIZATION IN SANA, AND WITH OTHER OFFICIALS AT

SECONDARY LEVELS AT MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND PLANNING MINISTRIES. HE GAVE TALK WHICH WAS ADVERTISED IN NEWS-PAPER. WE CONCLUDE THAT, LIKE PROJECTS FOR ROADS, SCHOOLS AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, AWARENESS OF NEED FOR POPULATION CONTROL HAS ONLY BEGUN IN YEMEN.

5. IN CONVERSATIONS OF CHARGE AND FORMER AMBASSADOR WITH TOP-RANKING OFFICIALS LIKE PRIME MINISTER AND PLANNING MINISTER IN PAST, WE HAVE NOTED THAT YEMEN IS A FOOD DEFICIT COUNTRY WITH POTENTIAL POPULATION PROBLEM. REPLY OF OFFICIALS IS YEMEN IS ALSO CASH SURPLUS COUNTRY AND HAS BEEN EASILY ABLE TO PAY FOR SURGING IMPORTS OF FOOD IN LAST FEW YEARS. THESE OFFICIALS, IN FACT, POINT OUT THAT YEMEN'S WEALTH IS DUE TO EMIGRATION OF WORKERS TO SAUDI ARABIA AND GULF AND DECREASES IN THESE EMIGREES, DUE TO DEMOGRAPHIC OR OTHER REASONS, WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE TO YEMEN'S INTERESTS. WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IMPRESS ON THESE OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, THAT POPULATION CONTROL MERITS GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE, NOT JUST ACQUIESCENCE, FROM POINT OF VIEW OF WELFARE OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN. EVEN IN THIS PERSPECTIVE, HOWEVER, OFFICIALS SEE THEIR PRIORITY GOAL AS PROVIDING HEALTH SERVICES, MOTHER AND CHILD NUTRITION SUPPORT, FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION AND MANY OTHER ACTIVITIES BEFORE BIRTH CONTROL INFORMATION.

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6. HOWEVER, YARG VIEWS ARE AT LEAST IN PART AFFECTED BY THE FACT THAT A VIRTUALLY COMPLETE LACK OF MEANINGFUL STATISTICS HAS INHIBITED RATIONAL POLICY-MAKING. WE PLAN TO MAKE USE OF FINDINGS FROM UPCOMING STUDIES SUCH AS CDC NUTRITIONAL SURVEY TO BOLSTER OUR ARGUMENTS IN CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH YARG OF SUBJECT AND TO INCREASE YARG UNDERSTANDING OF DIMENSIONS OF PROBLEM IN LOCAL CONTEXT. NONETHELESS, AS ALLUDED TO EARLIER, WE EXPECT ONLY GRADUAL PROGRESS AT BEST. IT IS LIKELY THAT MOST DYNAMIC FORCE FOR CHANGE WILL COME FROM WOMEN THEMSELVES AS HIGH LABOR MIGRATION RESULTS IN THEIR ASSUMING MORE INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY. ANOTHER FACTOR IS EDUCATION. UNTIL RECENTLY WOMEN WERE EXCLUDED FROM WHAT LITTLE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM EXISTED. PRESENT EFFORTS TO EXTEND EDUCATION TO WOMEN WILL UNDOUBTEDLY INCREASE THEIR AWARENESS OF THE OPTIONS TO CURRENT SOCIETAL PATTERNS.
RANSOM

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Message Attributes

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